

APPLICATION UNDER UNITED STATES PATENT LAWS

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Invention: TOOL BOX WITH LIGHT

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SPECIFICATION

TOOL BOX WITH LIGHT

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional application serial no. 60/437,063 filed December 31, 2002. The entirety of the provisional application is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention is directed to a tool box. In particular, this invention is directed to a tool box with a light.

2. Discussion of Related Art

[0003] Typically, tool boxes are used to store tools or other items for portability. A user can transport the items to any desired location. As a result, the chosen location may or may not have adequate lighting to use the stored items. Areas under repair or construction often have inadequate lighting.

[0004] Poor lighting can pose several problems for the user. First, it may be difficult to locate items stored in the box. This is especially dangerous when the items are sharp. Second, it is difficult to properly use the items when the surrounding area is dark or not sufficiently illuminated.

[0005] For example, an automobile driver can experience a flat tire anywhere, which includes dark or poorly light roadways. On a dark roadway, it would be difficult to find the necessary tools in the box without the aid of a light. Even with a hand held flashlight, it would be difficult to use the tools while holding the flashlight. In such a situation, a conventional tool box may be rendered useless.

[0006] Thus, there is a need for a container, such as a tool box, that has a self contained light, especially a light that can be used when the tool box is open or closed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] An aspect of this invention is to provide a container with a self contained illumination device.

[0008] Another aspect of this invention is to provide a container with a light that can be used when the container is open and closed.

[0009] A further aspect of the invention is to provide a container that has an interior storage compartment suitable for storing tools and has an integral light.

[0010] An additional aspect of the invention is to provide a tool box with a light that can be positioned to illuminate surrounding areas and the interior of the tool box.

[0011] The invention relates to a tool box comprising a base having a bottom and side walls, and a cover having a top and side walls. The cover is movably mounted to the base to move between a closed position and an open position, and the base and the cover define a storage compartment therein. One of the side walls has a light permeable lens mounted therein. A light is mounted in the storage compartment and includes a power source and an illumination device. The illumination device is oriented toward the light permeable lens.

[0012] The light can be movably mounted in the cover on an articulated support such that the light is movable between a first position directed to the light permeable lens and a second position directed within the base. The box may have a pivoting handle mounted to the cover and a removable tray disposed within the box.

[0013] The invention also relates to a container comprising a bottom wall, a top wall, and an outer side wall extending between the bottom wall and the top wall to form a fully contained interior storage compartment. The outer side wall has a light transmitting opening therethrough. A light is mounted within the interior storage compartment and includes a power source and an illumination device. The illumination device is positioned at the light transmitting opening.

[0014] The container may have an articulated support coupled to the light such that the light may be moved from a first position directed at the light transmitting opening to a second position directed within the interior storage compartment.

[0015] These and other aspects of the invention will be apparent taken with the detailed description below.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0016] Features of the invention are shown in the drawings in which:
- [0017] FIG. 1 is perspective front view of the container in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention in a closed position;
- [0018] FIG. 2 is a front view of the container of FIG. 1;
- [0019] FIG. 3 is a side view of the container of FIG. 1;
- [0020] FIG. 4 is a perspective front view of the container of FIG. 1 in an open position;
- [0021] FIG. 5 is an enlarged view of the light in accordance with an embodiment of the invention; and
- [0022] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a modified container in accordance with the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

- [0023] This invention relates to a container and is described with particular reference to a container used as a tool box 10. However, it should be understood that the invention can be applied to any storage container, not necessarily intended to store tools. For example, the container could be used for make-up, art supplies, gardening tools, or any desired items. Thus, the reference to a tool box used herein is intended to generically cover any portable storage container.
- [0024] Referring to FIG. 1, tool box 10 includes a base 12 and a cover 14, both preferably made of molded plastic. Of course, other materials could be used, including metal, wood, or composites.
- [0025] Base 12 has a bottom wall 16, seen in FIG. 2, and an exterior side wall 18 formed as four side walls extending from each edge of the bottom wall 16. The side walls 18 and bottom wall 16 can have various depressed or raised portions 20 for strengthening ribs or for aesthetic reasons. The bottom wall 16 may have protrusions 22 to slightly elevate the bottom wall 16 from a support surface, thus protecting the bottom wall 16 and making it easier to lift the container 10. The bottom wall 16 and side walls 18 define an interior storage

compartment 24, seen in FIG. 4. The front side wall 18 has a pair of hook portions 26 to latch the cover 14, as described below.

[0026] The cover 14 has a top wall 28 and an exterior side wall 30 formed as four side walls extending from each edge of the top wall 28. The top wall 28 and side walls 30 form an internal compartment 32, seen in FIG. 4. Compartment 24 and compartment 32 join to form an interior storage space.

[0027] Top wall 28 has a handle 34 pivotally mounted thereon in a handle depression 36. By this configuration, handle 34 can pivot between an upright lifting position and a folded position flush with the top surface of the container. A storage compartment 38 with a cover 40 is optionally provided in the top wall 28 of the cover 14. The compartment cover 40 snaps to the side wall 30 to securely store items. Preferably, the compartment cover 40 is translucent so that objects stored in the compartments 38 can be seen without opening the compartment cover 40. As seen in FIG. 1, a storage compartment 38 is provided on each side of the cover 14. Any configuration of storage compartments 38 may be provided.

[0028] Cover 14 is coupled to base 12 with a hinge 42, seen in FIGs. 3 and 4. Any type of hinge may be used that allows the cover 14 to open with respect to the base 12. Latches 44 are mounted to cover 14 to selectively secure cover 14 to hooks 26 on base 12. Again, any type of latch may be used. A locking formation 46 may be provided to mount a lock to the container 10 if desired. The locking formation 46 includes a pair of aligned slots formed on the edge of cover 14 and base 12 through which a lock may be inserted.

[0029] A generally cylindrical protrusion 48 is formed in the front side wall 30 of cover 14 that has a light permeable lens 50. As seen in FIG. 3, preferably the protrusion 48 is flush with the outer surface of the tool box 10. However, the size of the protrusion 48 and the extent to which it extends from the cover 14 can vary based on design choice. It is even possible to mount the lens 50 flush with the side wall 30 of cover 14 without a protrusion 48. The lens 50 is preferably clear, transparent plastic, but could also be a colored lens if desired. Any material may be used that permits light transmission.

[0030] As seen in FIG. 4, the protrusion 48 is designed to mate with a light 52 that is retained within the cover 14 inside the box 10. The light 52 is seen in detail in FIG. 5. Preferably, the light 52 includes a body 54 with a power source 56, in this case batteries, contained in a compartment therein and an illumination device 58, such as an incandescent bulb. The body 54 is preferably made of lightweight material, such as plastic. Of course, any

type of power source may be used, including conventional alkaline batteries or rechargeable batteries.

[0031] The illumination device 58 may be any known device that generates light, including various known types of light bulbs. The illumination device 58 is preferably covered with a lens 60. The compartment for the power source is covered with a pivotal compartment cover 62 that may be opened with a releasable latch 64 for easy access to the power source. By this, for example, batteries may be quickly and easily changed when necessary. An ON/OFF switch 65 is provided on the body 54 to connect the power source 56 to the illumination device 58. The back end of the body 54 has a pivot rod 66 with a serrated gear 68, the purpose of which is described below. The compartment cover 62 is carried on the pivot rod 66 for easy pivoting with respect to the body 54.

[0032] Referring back to FIG. 4, the light 52 is mounted in the cover 14 on a pair of flanges 70 that retain pivot rod 66 and create an articulated support. At least one of the flanges 70 also has a serrated gear similar to gear 68 designed to engage gear 68 when the body 54 of the light 52 is rotated. By this engagement, each serration defines a discrete position at which the light 52 may be disposed. This enables the light 52 to be securely positioned at any desired angle to illuminate the interior storage compartment 24 or the environment surrounding the tool box 10.

[0033] The internal compartment 32 of the cover 14 also has a locking formation 72 in the form of a pair of hooked fingers 74 that protrude outwardly from the cover 14. The hooked fingers 74 are positioned to surround and engage the body 54 of the light 52 when the light 52 is pivoted upwardly into the internal compartment 32. The hooked fingers 74 lock the light 52 in place into alignment with the lens 50 so that the illumination device 58 is directed outward through the lens 50. In this position, the cover 14 can be closed while the light 52 is turned ON to illuminate the environment around the tool box 10. The light 52 can also remain ON when the tool box 10 is transported.

[0034] A removable tray 76, for storing small items for example, may be mounted in the internal compartment 24. Tray 76 has a handle 78 and can be lifted from the box 10 to hold and transport tools or other items. Base 12 has an inner flange that supports the lip of the tray 76. When the cover 14 is closed, tray 76 does not interfere with light 52. It is also possible to form internal non-removable compartments in the internal compartment 24.

[0035] It can be seen by above description that tool box 10 includes a light 52 that can be used when the cover 14 is open or closed. The position of light 52 can also be selectively adjusted to shine out of the box 10 or within the box 10 at various locations in the compartment 24. This allows a user to use the box 10 to illuminate an object that the user is working on, such as an automobile tire, and to illuminate the interior of the box 10 to locate a tool when insufficient external light is available, such as at a roadside.

[0036] FIG. 6 shows a modified storage container 80 having a larger base 82 and a cover 84 with a light opening 86. Cover 84 has partitioned compartments 88 on each side that have compartment covers. As can be appreciated from the various compartment arrangements, any shape or number of compartments can be provided if desired. In this case, base 82 is significantly larger and may constitute a workbench type of storage container. A light within the container 80 works in the same manner as box 10.

[0037] Various modifications and changes can be made to the invention and remain within the scope of the invention. It is possible to mount the light in the base, rather than the cover. It is also possible to modify the position of the light transmitting opening to be in the base or in another position on the cover.

[0038] It is also contemplated that the light can be removable, in which case the body of the light can be formed as a sleeve that the light is removably retained in so that a user can remove the light and use it as a hand held flashlight. Alternatively, the body of the light can be released from the hinge, such as by a snap fit, for hand held use. These and other modifications are within the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.